

Ideas for Recognizing Volunteers

- Pat on the Back: Trace your hand on plain paper and cut out. Write, “Here’s a pat on the back for _____. Thanks for all your hard work.” Invite staff, other volunteers or anyone else that has contact with the volunteers to make one in recognition of the service of particular volunteers. Hang them all together for visual impact.
- Handwritten thank you notes to the volunteer.
- Send thank you notes to the volunteers’ paid workplace, either directly to their supervisor the Human Resources department. These may make their way into their personnel file and often shine a light on the good work of their employee that they were not aware of.
- Plan social activities: rent out a movie theater for movie night, or simply take the volunteers to the movies, have an ice cream social or afternoon tea party, host a dinner or dance.
- Food and candy ideas:
 - Give Lifesavers candy and attach a note that says, “You’re a *lifesaver*!”
 - Give a mint and attach a note that says, “We *mint* to thank you!”
 - Give a pack of peanuts and attach a note that says, “We would go *nuts* without your support!”
 - Give a cinnamon bun and attach a note that says, “Thanks for working your *buns* off!”
 - Give a cupcake and attach a note that says, “You take the *cake*!”
 - Fill a wine glass with candy and attach a note that says, “A *toast* to a job well done!”
 - Give Hershey’s Hugs and Kisses candy.
 - Make a personalized wrapper for a candy bar.
- If you work with children, ask them to make thank you cards for volunteers.
- Free certificates and citations signed by the Governor are available from the KCCVS: <http://chfs.ky.gov/dhss/kccvs/recognition/>.
- Smile and simply say “Thank you!”
- Have a volunteer of the month, put up a picture in your office and send it to the local newspaper.
- Listen to their suggestions, implement when appropriate and give them credit.
- Use votive candles for National Volunteer Week. Wrap the candles in cellophane and tie them with a note stating, “You light up the lives of so many!” You can also use notes stating, “You lighten our load by volunteering.”
- Check out more volunteer recognition ideas on the Web:
 - Volunteer Canada: <http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-management/hints.php?display=4,0#recog>
 - A Seattle school: <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/vol/docs/3-8-appreciation.pdf>
 - Energize, Inc.: <http://www.energizeinc.com/ideas/awards.html>